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THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

Entered as second-class matter November 18, 1907, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of Congress of March 1, 1879

VOL. V

NEW YORK, MARCH 2, 1912

No. 17

No stronger proof of the genius of any writer can be adduced than his enduring power to charm his readers and no poet has met this test with such success as Vergil. Those who study him most are most enthusiastic. In the light of his genius his faults disappear or become actual virtues. An example of this is found in the spirited and interesting paper on Teaching Vergil which Professor H. H. Yeames has contributed to The School Review for January. The title of the paper is, to be sure, more or less of a misnomer, because the suggestions for teaching Vergil are confined to the last three or four pages; the greater part of the essay is a panegyric and defence of Vergil of the type familiar indeed yet never wearisome.

Professor Yeames emphasizes at the beginning the high position which Vergil has held from his own time to the present, the influence he has had upon culture and upon all poets of rank. He quotes with approval Professor Woodberry's remark that "he is the great mediator between antiquity and Christendom". He shows how, in this connection, Vergil has influenced early Christian thought and thrown the glamor of his poetry over the greatest of the Fathers, how Vergil has furnished by innumerable quotations stimulus to art and high resolve even down to the motto of one of our newest States—Oklahoma. He has been the divining Bible to the small and the great from Hadrian to Charles I. All these well-known facts Professor Yeames brings together with enthusiasm and appreciation. He then proceeds to reply to the three main accusations usually brought against the poet, to wit, his plagiarism, his flattery of Augustus, and the weakness of character in Aeneas.

In answer to the first he contents himself with Vergil's own retort to a similar criticism. In answer to the second charge, flattery of Augustus, he goes at length into the general attitude of the Roman world towards Augustus, the emperor who had brought finally to the world the *pax Romana*, and he maintains with justice that Vergil does not flatter Augustus but venerates him as a great man occupying an unequaled place in history. He supports his view by quotations from contemporaries, from commentators and from later authors, and shows that thinking men had no fear that gratitude might be misconstrued as flattery.

The third charge, the weakness of the character of Aeneas, Professor Yeames regards as fully answered in the essay of Professor Rand, Virgil and the Drama, contributed to Volume 4 of The Classical Journal. This I should dispute. Professor Rand's paper is a very interesting, keen and specious essay, but it is like all other essays of this type. It is an explanation and an excuse, not a vindication. No matter how much we may try to explain, there remains deep-seated in our consciousness the feeling that Aeneas was a weakling, almost a scoundrel. Professor Yeames, when off his guard, admits this in the remark that Charles I in consulting Vergil "drew upon himself the tremendous curse pronounced by Dido upon the *recreant* Aeneas". Of course Professor Yeames meant 'pious' and used recreant only because his heart triumphed over his mind. So it is throughout Professor Rand's paper. We understand fully that Aeneas was a pawn in the great drama which Vergil unfolds, that he is god-directed and that he yields to the god at once. The chief place in the early part of the Aeneid is held by the episode of Dido, which Professor Rand rightly regards as a tragedy of the highest order. But appreciation of the art of Vergil is quite consistent with the acknowledgment that his hero is a poor hero. Unquestionably Vergil did not intend him to be a bad hero, unquestionably Vergil intended him to be a high type of humanity, but after all his endeavors he has created a hero who is brave, high-minded, tender, but at the same time morally craven. The Hebrew scriptures have many a hero who wrestled with God, but there is no indication that Aeneas ever wrestled with God in defence of his own manhood. It will not do to say that the Dido episode was fully understood and appreciated by the Romans and that they approved of the character of Aeneas; there is no proof of this. But that the Romans should have been much moved by the story of Dido is thoroughly comprehensible. Did not Julius Caesar enact a similar rôle to Cleopatra? We all readily admit that Aeneas was sorry to leave Dido, that he wept tears over it, although weeping was not a distinctive characteristic of the Romans as it was of the Greeks. In fact we haven't much justification for assuming that the great Roman heroes wept at all. But this tenderness of Aeneas is the tenderness of a moral coward who is not excused by the fact that he was

playing a rôle put upon him by the gods. Professor Yeames, as well as other critics, admits the art shown by Vergil in depicting the character of Dido; in this character, surely, the Roman poet has made a wonderful success. She is one of the great women of history. The explanation to my mind lies in the fact that Vergil was a feminine type himself; in depicting Dido he was writing out of his own nature. I do not concede that his nickname, *Parthenias*, refers, as Professor Yeames thinks, to his shyness and modest boyish disposition. I think that like so many divinations of the young it describes his character throughout. No, the plain facts of the story are these. Aeneas, a man no longer young, but with large experience of life and the world, with a mind schooled to misfortune and a judgment tested by the crises of war, yields without resistance to a passion which was only bad because it was counter to the will of the gods, abuses the hospitality of his hostess and at the first hint from on high abandons his honor and proceeds forthwith upon his high mission. This is the story. It contains elements of the greatest pathos, of the greatest tragedy. It is a tragedy—as much of a tragedy as anything that was performed upon the Roman stage of the period. In this Professor Rand is right but it is the claim of us classicists that classical literature endures because it has a universal appeal and it is before this bar that Aeneas fails: We can explain and excuse as much as we desire and our admiration for the poet may palliate all his faults, but Aeneas is a craven and will be a craven so long as the spirit of honor remains upon the earth.

G. L.

A COIN OF TRAJAN DECIUS

A dull lead-colored, jagged-edged, rather oblate piece of old money, half-way between the size of a nickel and a quarter of a dollar, with a crowned head and surrounding legend on one face, and the device of two standing women and an arched, wide-spaced inscription upon the other—such was the coin that recently happened into my hands, bringing with it weird reminiscences of centuries past and that indefinable charm that comes from out the wraithland of antiquity. I was forthwith an unresisting prey to indescribable sensations, as only he knows who has ever fondled an ancient coin. What wonder, when that coin may have the power to tear away whole millenia and spirit one far back into the babyhood of our era!

I did not at once recognize the portrait upon the obverse, though I confessed vague memories of having seen that same face once before. At any rate, there was that about the radiate crown, clinging at a rakish angle to the back of the head, something

about the prominent ears, nose, and chin and wrinkled forehead, which immediately recalled to my mind the portrait-busts of some of the later Roman Emperors I had seen reproduced somewhere, perhaps in Drury's History, or in Baumeister's *Denkmäler*. This, it is true, was not a very great advance toward the identification of this particular Emperor, for it always has seemed to me that the numismatic likenesses of the later Emperors, say Gallienus and his successors, gave a score or more of them a strangely striking family resemblance.

Neither did a first cursory glance at the legend surrounding the portrait reveal much more. The legend, I well knew, should disclose the Emperor's name and crown-title, and I confidently expected an easy task here, for the lettering was not at all effaced or obliterated; there would be not the least call to use a magnifying glass. But, to my dismay, many of the letters, though not worn, seemed indistinctly formed, and all that was yielded by a rapid survey was IMP., leading off in the formula, low down on the left, almost directly under the portrait, an AVG., equally as clear at the close of the legend on the right, and, at the top of the coin, just over the Emperor's head, the letters—IANVS. Here, at least, was one of that long list of Emperors whose name ended in—IANVS, though this, too, was not a very hopeful step toward individualization, if one were to run down the catalogue of such personages.

But, happily, the logic they call 'the method of residues' came to my assistance and reduced the mighty tribe of the —IANI to more comfortable limits. This present Emperor could stand neither near the beginning nor at the close of the list. A formula that began, as did this one, with IMP. and ended with AVG. was evidence of late times in the Imperium, for, under the earlier Princes, Augustus was customarily given a position nearer the beginning, rather than at the immediate close, of the crown-title. So, although there were exceptions early and late, the chances were pretty strong that this IMPERATOR . . . IANUS . . . Augustus came later than the reign of Caracalla at least. On the other hand, so late a period as that of Diocletian would have made D.N., Dominus Noster, not indeed a necessary, but a highly probable introductory phrase for the throne-name. So the formidable family of the —IANI was dwindling considerably.

There were several other considerations that strengthened this rather wide guess. The leaden color of the coin, its diminutive size, light weight, certain crudities in the form of the letters, and general shoddy appearance all convinced me that this was a mintage of the late Principate, of the decline of the Empire, of a period somewhere, perhaps, around the reigns of Aurelian or the Thirty